



262751



CONTACT: (EPA) Mike Joyce, (312) 353-5546  
(Illinois EPA) Maggie Carson, (217) 557-8138

**For Immediate Release No. 02-OPA098**

---

## ***EPA SENDS NOTICE OF POTENTIAL LIABILITY LETTERS TO DOWNERS GROVE BUSINESSES***

CHICAGO (Aug. 5, 2002) — Fifteen businesses or public entities in Downers Grove, Ill., are being told they may be at least partly liable for groundwater contamination in an unincorporated area near the Ellsworth Industrial Park. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 5 sent letters Friday to each affected business. The letter asks representatives of the businesses to meet with EPA, Illinois EPA and the Illinois Attorney General on August 20. Following this meeting, EPA will be available to meet with each business individually to discuss further investigation and control of contamination from their properties. Notification to potentially responsible parties is a required procedure under the federal Superfund law.

"Issuing these 'notice letters' is an important step toward a thorough investigation and cleanup of this contamination," said regional Superfund director William Munro. "The Superfund law is based on the idea that the polluter should pay for whatever remedy is required. In this case, we are first looking to the generators of the waste to conduct a more detailed investigation and ultimately, the cleanup."

- more -

"This is a turning point that the affected homeowners have been waiting for," said Illinois EPA Director Renee Cipriano. "A cooperative spirit in combining the resources of the state and federal agencies has been instrumental in this ongoing effort."

Since July 2001, Illinois EPA has tested over 500 private wells in unincorporated Downers Grove for the presence of the industrial degreasing solvents trichloroethylene (TCE) and tetrachloroethylene (PCE). Of these, more than 200 were above the safe drinking water standard for one or both of the chemicals. The solvents were also detected in another 200 wells, but at levels considered to be safe.

EPA and Illinois EPA have also installed more than 40 monitoring wells in the area, collected groundwater samples at 50 locations and taken soil borings at 90 locations. As a result of this investigation, the agencies have concluded that Ellsworth Industrial Park is the source of the groundwater contamination. A final investigation report is expected to be released in late August.

The letters were sent to businesses that used solvents in their operations or where groundwater and/or soil sampling has detected solvent contamination. These include: Ames Supply Co.; Arrow Gear; Bison Gear & Engineering Co.; Downers Grove Sanitary District; Fusibond; Liberty Copper & Wire; Lindy Manufacturing Co.; Magnetrol International Inc.; Molex; Precision Brand Products Inc.; Rexnord Corp.; Scot Inc.; Suburban Self Storage; Tricon Industries Inc.; and White Lake Building Corporation.

Local officials and representatives of both environmental agencies will be available Wednesday, Sept. 4, at 6:30 p.m., in Downers Grove Village Hall, 801 Burlington Ave., to discuss the latest findings of the investigation. For more information, contact community involvement coordinators Mike Joyce (EPA; 312 353-5546) or Carol Fuller (Illinois EPA; 217 524-8807).

# # #